

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5477

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USCINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL ADDIS ABABA 8622

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: POLICE ARRESTS AND MILITARY MALAISE (CONTINUED)

REF: A) ADDIS 8510 NOTAL; B) ADDIS 8607

1. REPORTS REACHING EMBASSY SINCE REFTEL DRAFTED SUGGEST THAT ARRESTS BOTH IN POLICE AND AMONG MILITARY, NOTABLY AIR FORCE PERSONNEL AT DEBRE ZEIT ARE CONTINUING.

2. IN ADDITION TO VICE COMMANDER OF POLICE, BG SHAWUL ZELEKA AND ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER BG DEMMELASH, WHOSE ARRESTS WERE REPORTED IN PARA 2 REF A, WE UNDERSTAND THAT COL. TEDELLE DESTA (DIRG SECURITY), COL. ENGEDA TELAHUN (CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER), CAPT. GETAHUN MENGISTE (IN CHARGE OF POLICE PRESS RELATIONS), CAPT. FIKRE (PERSONNEL OFFICER), AND LT. MELESSE (ADMINISTRATOR IN CHARGE OF POLICE NCO'S) HAVE BEEN TAKEN. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW MANY SMALLER FRY HAVE ALSO BEEN DETAINED. A/MIN IN MOFA TOLD POL COUNSELOR EVENING JULY 17 THAT THREE BUSLOADS OF ARRESTED AIR FORCE PERSONNEL, INCLUDING MANY OFFICERS, HAD BEEN BROUGHT FROM DEBRE CONFIDENTIAL

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SEIT/HAME AFB TO ADDIS IN CONNECTION WITH CIRCULATION OF SEDITIOUS

LEAFLETS ALLEGEDLY TYING THEM INTO MACHINATIONS WHICH LED TO THE BRIEF DETENTION OF POLICE COMMISSIONER BERHANE TEFERA AND THE APPARENT RELATED ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO SEIZE PMAC CHAIRMAN TAFARI BANTE WHILE THE LATTER WAS RECENTLY VISITING 3RD DIVISION TROOPS IN HARAR (CF REF B).

3. AS A RESULT WE ARE TOLD THAT TENSION IN THE POLICE AND AMONG THE MILITARY IS CURRENTLY VERY HIGH. IT APPEARS TO US THAT THIS IS RELATED MORE TO AN AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A POSSIBLE PMAC/POLICE CLASH -- IF IT MATERIALIZES -- THEN TO ANY SPECIFIC INDICATION THAT IT WILL. AT THIS WRITING WE THUS HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE THE POLICE AGAINST PMAC NOR DO WE SEE ANY EVIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR SUCH AN EFFORT. THE TENSION THUS APPARENTLY RELATES TO THE WIDESPREAD PERCEPTION OF WHAT IS NEW IN THIS SITUATION, VIZ, THAT PMAC MAY BE TAKING ON A LARGE ORGANIZED AND WELL ARMED OPPONENT AS COMPARED WITH THE DISPARATE ILL-EQUIPPED SMALL GROUPS OF DISSIDENTS WITH WHICH IT HAS THUS FAR BEEN FACED. TO REPEAT: WHETHER OR NOT THIS WILL IN FACT OCCUR AND SOMEONE OR SOME GROUP WILL EMERGE AT THIS JUNCTURE TO TRY TO CAPITALIZE ON PMAC VULNERABILITY IN THE SITUATION WHICH NOW OBTAINS, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

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